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EDUCATION & LOCAL GOV'T IC
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EXHIBIT 24

June 15, 2012

To: Education and Local Government Interim Committee

From: Madalyn Quinlan, Chief of Staff

Subject: Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium - Technology Readiness Tool

As part of Montana's participation in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, school districts in Montana are completing a set of surveys to determine their readiness to provide on-line student assessments beginning in 2014-2015. The results of the surveys, to be updated each fall and spring through 2014, will allow districts to document their progress toward the administration of the Smarter Balanced assessments in 2015.

During May and June 2012, five Montana school systems are participating in a pilot project for the Technology Readiness Tool. The five school systems are Bozeman, Cascade, Ekalaka, Lewistown, and Montana City. These school systems are using the tool to provide information on the number of testing devices (computers and tablets), the district's internet and network bandwidth, the utilization of the district's bandwidth and networks, and the number of wireless access points. The districts are also providing estimates of the numbers of test-takers in the school system and the number of simultaneous test-takers. The Technology Readiness Tool asks districts to provide information on their level of concern with the number of test administrators and technology support staff in the district as well as their level of concern with the technical understanding of these administrators and technical support staff.

As of June 8, Cascade and Ekalaka have reported their data. Bozeman, Lewistown and Montana City are currently working toward completion of their data entry and will enter their data into the Technology Readiness Tool by June 30, 2012.

Once the pilot is completed, OPI will make the Technology Readiness Tool available to all school systems in the state. With the information that we compile from the district responses, OPI will be able to estimate the cost of computer upgrades, expansion of computer networks and internet access, and personnel costs to support the assessment process.